



**MARCH  
2003**

Monthly update  
to the Youth  
Action Council  
and Youth  
Service Teams

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# THE YACKITY-YAC

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## WORKING WITH THE MEDIA

Using the media effectively is an excellent way to promote your project and educate the public about your organization's mission. By putting effort into media outreach, you can reach thousands of people in an instant. That publicity can help you find new recruits, reach new sources of funds, recognize hard-working volunteers and develop media relationships that will help you in the future. The following tips will get you started:

### **Develop a Time Line**

The timing of your outreach effort depends in large part on the results you want to achieve. If you're depending on the media to recruit volunteers, you should start your media campaign as much as four to six weeks before your event. For inclusion in a community calendar, two to four weeks is necessary. TV and radio stations usually need several weeks' lead-time to schedule an appearance on a talk show. One week's advance notice typically is sufficient if you're asking a reporter to cover the event itself. But remember: these are only guidelines. Be sure to check with the media outlets themselves to find out their deadlines.

### **Compile a Media Contact List**

The list should include local and regional newspapers and magazines; local television, cable and radio stations; wire services such as Associated Press and Reuters; and special-interest media such as ethnic publications, college and community newspapers, church bulletins, and corporate and community newsletters. Most libraries have media directories you can use; your state service commission also can be helpful. Keep up with your local TV and newspaper coverage to identify reporters who cover social and community issues, or columnists who might be interested in your efforts.

### **Come up with a Pitch**

Think about a succinct message or "pitch"-a few words that will convince the media that your story is interesting, timely and newsworthy. This message can be reinforced in your media advisory, press release and any interviews you give.

### **Write a Public Service Announcement**

Radio PSAs, which run at no cost to you, are a great way to recruit volunteers and to get the word out about your event. The message should be short but complete, and include a phone number to call for more information. Send the announcement to the radio station's public service director and allow plenty of lead-time.

### **Fax a Media Advisory**

Five to seven days before the event, you should fax a media advisory to everyone on the press list. Keep it short and specific, including key information about the event-who, what, where, when, and why-and contact information. Be sure to fax the advisory to wire service "day-

books," which are the daily calendars of events that reporters use to plan their day.

### **Write a Press Release**

A press release gives a reporter a base for writing a story on your event. It's like a news article - except that you write it. Press releases can be written before the event, to attract advance notice or attention, or they can be written after the event, to inform the media about the day's accomplishments. Include quotes from organizers and participants, details of the project's goals and activities, background about your organization and your contact information. *Continued on page 2...*

**Doing good deeds is like  
wetting your pants: everyone  
can see it...but only you can  
feel the warmth.  
-Unknown**

The Yackity-YAC is published by the Utah Commission on Volunteers. Individuals who receive the YAC are asked to share the newsletter with others who are interested in youth service and volunteerism in Utah. For more information contact Kristi at 1-888-755-UTAH or [yes@utahspromise.org](mailto:yes@utahspromise.org)

# SERVICE AROUND UTAH

## Festival of Service (Beaver)

We held a Senior Ball at the local Geriatric Ward. We helped decorate, perform musical numbers for the program, dance and visit with the Seniors, and serve them refreshments. The evening was well received by geriatrics who always enjoy listening to music and being around the young people.

-Clarissa Kanell



Beaver team member Paula Porter dances with resident of Beaver Long Term Care.

## **Did you know?**

A recent government report found that more than 63 million Americans volunteered over the past year -- about 4 million more than in the year before. On average, volunteers gave 52 hours -- more than a full week of work -- of their year in service to others

## **CALENDAR OF 2004 REGIONAL YOUTH SUMMITS**

April 16-17 Salt Lake Region, in Salt Lake City  
May 1 Northern Region, in Logan  
May 1 Utah/Wasatch Region, in Provo  
May 7-8 Eastern Region, in Blanding  
June 3-5 Southern Region, in St. George

## **WORKING WITH THE MEDIA**

*...continued from page 1.*

### **Work the Phones**

Follow up public service announcements, media advisories, and press releases with telephone calls to remind reporters and editors of your event. When you call newspapers, ask for the city desk; when calling radio and TV stations, ask for an assignment editor in the newsroom. Point out "photo opportunities"-times when photographers would be able to find lively scenes to shoot-and suggest interesting volunteers whom reporters could interview. Do a final round of calls the morning of the event.

### **Assemble a Press Kit**

Each reporter at your event should receive a press kit that includes your press release, the day's agenda, fact sheets on the project and organizations involved, information on corporate sponsors and partners, and contact information. Make plenty of copies, and post the information on your website.

### **Select a Spokesperson**

Identify one or two individuals to articulate your message to the press. Condense your message and get it down cold.

### **Practice Doing Interviews**

Think sound bites: you probably will be on the air for a matter of seconds, so make the most of it.

### **Greet the Press**

Have a separate sign-in table for reporters and other members of the media. Also, make sure that a representative of your group is on hand to greet the press and to introduce reporters to the project's spokesperson or director.

### **Clip Stories**

Make copies of all newspaper stories about your event and be sure to turn on the VCR to record any TV pieces that run. Collecting these materials will help you recruit for your next project.

### **Say Thanks**

Be sure to thank reporters for good coverage. Like all of us, news people appreciate kudos for a job well done.

*Adapted from <http://www.mlkday.org/workmedia.html>*

## **UPCOMING NATIONAL DAYS OF SERVICE**

April 16-18, 2004 - National Youth Service Day

April 18-24, 2004 - National Volunteer Week